



County of Orange

**Planning & Development Services Department
Development Processing Center**

**300 N. Flower Street
Rm. 122
Santa Ana, CA 92703
Phone: (714) 834-2626
Fax: (714) 834-4772**

SUMMARY OF BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS FOR RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

1. **WHO MAY APPLY:** A property owner may apply for a building permit as the Owner-Builder and perform all of the required construction work. A licensed architect, Engineer or contractor may apply for a permit as the agent of the owner.

If contractor(s) or tradesmen are engaged to perform any part of the construction work valued in excess of One Hundred Dollars (\$100), they **MUST** submit evidence of having a valid Worker's Compensation Insurance. The law also requires that if an owner-builder employs or uses volunteer or paid services of one or more persons, including relatives they must hold a valid Worker's Compensation Insurance or a Certificate of Consent to Self Insure. In addition, work within public properties requires a separate Encroachment Permit, public liability and public damage insurance.

2. **FEES:** The Board of Supervisors establishes permit and plan check fees based upon the value of the proposed structure and the total square footage. Electrical, plumbing and mechanical permit fees are included with the building permit fees. Park fees are assessed for each newly constructed residence and also when a dwelling is converted to multiple residential use. School district fees shall be assessed by and paid to the school district before issuance of the building permit. Corridor fees shall be assessed by the County Transportation Division and shall be paid at time of issuance of the building permit.

3. **WHERE TO APPLY:**

- a. **FOR ALL UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AREAS**

Planning and Development
Development Processing Center
300 North Flower Street
Santa Ana, CA 92703-4048
Telephone (714) 834-2626

4. **ZONING ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL:**

- a. All building permit applications require compliance with zoning regulations prior to processing.
- b. Confirm the zoning requirements with the Planning and Zoning Counter (Station #1) **PRIOR** to committing your proposed project to extensive preparation. This is particularly important with regard to property line setback requirements of your

proposed structure and required distances from public right-of-way and easements. Also covered by these regulations are the permitted heights of buildings, fences and walls, locations of fences and walls, easements and land uses permitted in your zoning district.

- c. If you are proposing an additional structure on your site, ensure that you have given consideration to the minimum allowable distance between buildings, and between buildings and property lines. The Public Service Counter Staff can furnish you with the required information.
- d. If the proposed location of a structure does not conform to the zoning district regulations, the owner may qualify for a variance under certain circumstances. The planners in Zoning Administration can give you all of the required information, telephone (714) 834-2626. It must be kept in mind that applications for variances are NOT approved in all instances. The application must meet certain specified criteria. There are fees charged for the processing of variance applications.

5. WHEN ARE PERMITS REQUIRED:

- a. A building permit is required for the construction of structures, additions, alterations, retaining walls, and miscellaneous structures.
- b. In addition to the building permit, there may be other permits and/or approvals required for your proposed project such as: Use permits, site plan approval, environmental approval, grading and public property encroachment permits. These needs can be determined when your plans are being checked.
- c. Building permits are also required for re-roofing, re-plastering and interior alterations.

6. GRADING:

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, it must be determined if a grading permit will be required. A permit is generally required when the grading involves an excavation or fill exceeding 50 cubic yards, when cut and fill slopes are created, or in locations where geologic stability is suspect. Certain other conditions also require that a grading permit be obtained. The applicant should check with the Grading Section. If a grading permit is required, the associated building permit cannot be issued until the rough grading work is completed and approved by the Grading Section.

7. CONSTRUCTION PLANS:

- a. If you need design help, we suggest that you employ a consultant from the private sector such as a building designer, an engineer or n architect. Planning and Development employees are not permitted to design any portion of your structure.
- b. In addition to reading the subsequent paragraphs, you may wish to review the information presented in the following handout sheets: "Plan Requirements; Building Permit Applications and Requirements for Plot Plans."

- c. Your construction plans must clearly and legibly show precisely what you propose to build. For additions or alterations to existing buildings, plans must clearly differentiate between the following elements:

1. Existing structure(s) that will remain.
2. Existing structure(s) that will be removed.
3. Proposed new construction.

Drawings shall be accurately drawn to an appropriate scale. They shall be sufficiently complete so that compliance with the building code may be determined. An acceptable set of plans will usually include the following dimensioned and annotated drawings:

1. Plot Plan
2. Foundation Plan
3. Floor Plan
4. Roof Plan
5. Elevations
6. Cross Sections
7. Details and Specifications
8. Legal Description

- d. When it is determined that your plans demonstrate code compliance, they are stamped "APPROVED". One set of plans is retained in this office, one copy is sent to the Assessor's office and the applicant's set shall be kept on the job site, readily available at all times, while under construction, for reference by the inspection personnel of this Agency.
- e. One of the first steps you must take is to ensure that you have an accurately dimensioned plot plan that depicts the location of ALL existing and proposed structures, fences/walls, pools/spas, easements, etc. The plot plans must indicate the dimensions of all property lines, dimensions of all existing and proposed structures, swimming pools/spas, location and height of all walls/fences and necessary buildings or structures. It must show the abutting street(s), distance to the centerline of the street, the ultimate right-of-way line, sidewalks, curbs and drive approaches.
- f. The plot plan must accurately depict the various grade elevations of the site. If the site is relatively level, you may show only the various elevations on your plan. However, if the site is sloped more than one (1) foot in ten (10) feet, then your plans must depict the site accurately with contour lines and/or spot elevations. For further information, contact our Grading Section at (714) 834-2626.
- g. The plot (site) plan must show how you plan to route the surface water off of your site in an approved manner.
- h. In some cases it is required that plans be prepared under the direction of, and signed by, an architect or engineer. Two story additions, hillside houses, large span structures, masonry and concrete structures are examples. Structural engineering

designs shall consider the strength and stability of all structural elements (i.e., roof sheathing, rafters, beams, trusses, columns, walls, floors, foundations, etc.) when they are subjected to the forces induced by gravity, wind and earthquake. Engineering analyses may also be required for compliance with noise and energy regulations.

New dwellings and additions may be subject to review by the Fire Marshal for the possibility of requiring fire sprinklers. The plot plan shall include length and slope of driveway and distance to the nearest fire hydrant.

- i. When the project is an addition to an existing building, you must submit a floor plan of the area directly adjacent to the proposed addition, which shows dimensions of the rooms and shows the location and size of doors and windows.
- j. Any desired relocation or upgrading of the electrical service must be noted on the submitted plans.

8. WHEN CAN YOU OBTAIN YOUR PERMIT:

- a. The plans for the construction of minor accessory structures such as swimming pools/spas, patio covers and simple room additions can often be plan checked at the time of submittal at the Public Service Counter. If the plans demonstrate Building Code and Zoning Code compliance, a building permit may be approved and issued immediately.
- b. Major projects, such as a single-family dwelling, or a complex addition, may require a two or three week plan check period. Minor plan corrections required for demonstration of code compliance may be made in ink on the permits. Major corrections will require that the plans be reprinted. All corrections shall be made before a building permit will be issued.

9. SWIMMING POOLS/SPAS, WALLS AND FENCES:

- a. All swimming pools/spas must be enclosed with fencing or walls that are a minimum of five feet in height measured from the outside finished grade. All gates or doors giving access to the pool/spa area shall be self-closing and have a self-latching device.
- b. A building permit is required for all walls or fences over six feet in height (42" in front yard setback). Walls/fences over six feet in height must be engineered. Check with the zoning administration for a determination of the allowable height of walls/fences in your zoning district and on your particular site.
- c. Walls to retain level earth more than three feet in height, or walls that are impacted by surcharge, or walls to retain slope must be engineered and they require building permits. The engineer or architect who designs the retaining wall must sign the design plans and also the plot plan.

- d. Swimming pools or spas require engineered plans in which the plot plan and design/detail sheets shall be signed by the engineer/architect.

10. ENCROACHMENT INTO COUNTY PROPERTY:

- a. If you are going to be temporarily storing or placing anything on County property (road right-of-way, sidewalk, drive approach, flood control channel, park, beach, etc.), you are required to obtain approval and a permit in advance for this use from the County Property Permits Section of the Agency, located at the Development Processing Center, Ground Floor, 300 North Flower, Santa Ana, California 92702-4048, Telephone: (714) 834-2626 for information.
- b. Other permits required include: use of ads, roads, replacement permit for sidewalk installation, tree removal permit (where trees need to be removed in the public right-of-way when constructing new buildings), curb drain permits, water/sewer lateral and cable TV permits.
- c. If you are going to have a driveway approach constructed or relocated, you are required to obtain approval and a permit in advance from County Property Permits.

11. DITCHES AND TRENCHES:

Prior to the excavation of any trench to a depth of five feet or deeper, a permit must be obtained from the State of California Division of Occupational Safety & Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) 2100 E. Katella Avenue, Anaheim, California. Telephone (714) 939-0145. A grading permit may also be required.

12. BUILDING PERMIT VALIDATION:

- a. Your building permit becomes null and void if the proposed construction has not commenced within 180 days from the date of the permit issuance or if the construction work is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days. The permit, under certain qualifying circumstances may be extended. Contact the Public Service Counter staff for specific details.
- b. If a change of owner or contractor occurs, a new building permit must be obtained.

13. OTHER SERVICES:

Information regarding the following services which are NOT provided by the Planning and Development Services Department may be obtained by contacting the indicated Agency:

- a. Sewer connection: Call your local sanitation district. If you do know which is your correct district (listed on your tax bill), then inquire with our Public Service Counter staff in the Development Processing Center.
- b. Consumer problems at the Office of Consumer Affairs, Community Service Agency, 1300 South Grand Avenue, Building "B", Santa Ana, CA (714) 567-7420.

- c. County Recorder's Office: 12 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA (714) 834-2500.
- d. County Assessor's Office: 12 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA

Information - 834-2727

Exemptions - 834-4740

Identification of Property - 834-2775

- e. Housing and Redevelopment, 1170 Broadway, Santa Ana, CA (714) 480-2900.
- f. Worker's Compensation Insurance Information, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Room 469, Santa Ana, CA (714) 568-5176.
- g. California Coastal Commission South Coast District, 245 North Broadway, Suite 380, Long Beach, CA 92802 (310) 590-5071.
- h. Contractor's State License Board, 28 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA (800) 321-2752.
- i. State of California, Department of Industrial Relations, Industrial Safety (Cal-Osha), 2100 E. Katella Avenue, Anaheim, CA (714) 939-0145.
- j. State of California Energy Commission, 1516 9th Avenue, Sacramento, CA 92825 (916) 654-4287.

14. ASSISTANCE:

If you need assistance, please consult our staff at the Public Service Counter. The telephone number is (714) 834-2626.

SERVICES AVAILABLE AT OTHER LOCATIONS

SEWER CONNECTION PERMITS

Check your local listings or call our office for assistance. District permits must be obtained prior to issuance of County's permit for house connection.

COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (Environmental Health)

2009 E. Edinger Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 667-3600

Review plans involving food-dispensing activities (restaurants),
medical services (x-ray devices) and public pools.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

245 North Broadway, Suite 380
Long Beach, CA 92802
(310) 590-5011

Review of plans within coastal district.

BUILDING PERMIT RECORDS

300 North Flower
Room 122
Santa Ana, CA 92703
(714) 834-2626

Research historical and existing building and grading permits.

BUILDING INSPECTION SERVICES

22921 Triton Way
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 472-7979

The Building Inspection Division, which includes all building and grading inspectors, is located in the South County Regional Office.

STREET ADDRESS NUMBERS

Public Works Survey
300 North Flower

Room 252
Santa Ana, CA 92702-4048
(714) 834-2477

Assigns and provides information on existing addresses.

COUNTY FIRE MARSHALL
1110 E. Chapman Avenue
Orange, CA
(714) 744-0403

Consultation on Fire Code Compliance questions.